



How Insight Via™ Helped an Agribusiness Implement Safety in a Time of Rapid Growth

Heartland Co-op, a Midwest grain cooperative, has continually focused on growth and unification to provide its customers with the best products, services and, most importantly, leverage in the grain market.

Yet with this commitment to growth, the cooperative faced a rapid increase in facilities, machinery, and hardware and employees, all which come with the responsibility to manage, maintain and keep them safe.

Safety Director Bill Chizek, tasked with overseeing Heartland Co-op’s safety and compliance programs for its 71 locations said leadership was “having a difficult time” organizing all the paperwork required by such fast growth.

“We were growing faster than I could keep up,” he said.

Luckily, the cooperative had access to the Insight Via™ Safety Management System (SMS), but at the time was only utilizing it for OSHA 300A reports. It took the intervention of a DEKRA consultant to show leadership how the software could help lead growth.

Insight Via™ was first used to identify Heartland Co-op’s need for a complete system in helping scale their safety programs and help manage the paperwork. “We needed a system for tracking government reporting, preventative maintenance type information, and of course our BBS observations,” said Chizek. “The need for this program was to track and bring reporting information back out to employees and management.”

As is common with many organizations, vast amounts of time and effort is put into collecting information, but it does not get communicated out efficiently or effectively to be used creating safer work environments.

First Step For Insight Via™: Preventative Maintenance

In an effort to improve lines of communication and create efficient, effective and engaging ownership in the safety programs, leadership put a plan in place. The cooperative began implementing Insight Via™ into specific aspects of their safety programs.

Heartland Co-op started with the preventative maintenance piece of Insight Via™ and then moved into the incident reporting, such as claims and near misses. As the employees grew familiar with each piece and program, the cooperative continued to execute full implementation of nearly every application within Insight Via™, which also led to the implementation of a Behavior-Based Safety (BBS) program.

When creating this kind of change within an organization's operations and everyday culture, engaging employees and building strong communication from top to bottom is key. The safety director explained that the greatest barrier was getting employees comfortable with using the system and training them.

“We knew it was going to work from the start because we were going to push hard not to fail. Getting key employees involved also helped with the process. We picked around 10 key employees to help promote it,” Chizek said.

Using Insight Via™ to Make Smarter Business Decisions

After gradually implementing different aspects of safety in the Insight Via™ SMS for more than eight years, Heartland Co-op built an expectation around the system and its programs.

“Our safety culture has definitely changed for the better. Everyone in our company understands they have certain responsibilities for Insight Via™ and safety within our company,” Chizek said.

By organizing the information more efficiently over dozens of locations, the cooperative can now communicate expectations more effectively, which improves the operational side of the business as well.

“We are able to pull data from Insight Via™ to help us make business decisions and training programs to help reduce our TIR type numbers and keep our MOD rates low,” he said.

“We have improved on our operational side when it comes to preventative maintenance and tracking expenses and inventory materials.”

In order for safety programs to be successful, data collected has to be analyzed, communicated and acted upon. Using an integrated management system helps create the efficiencies to do those things in the most effective manner, and it shows. Since implementing the system, the cooperative has been able to maintain an annual TIR rate of 2.25 or lower, including one low of .75.

However, leadership is not complacent and continues to strive for improvement. Chizek is excited about the future commitment to success with plans for continuous improvement.

“Hopefully, we'll keep expanding the usage. Our whole upper management team is on board and the communication piece is important,” Chizek said. Having every location connected through the alert system “is key to the success of this program,” he said.

Learn more:

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